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Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century

Letter dated 24 March 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to attach a copy of the Port of Spain Consensus, which was adopted at the Third Caribbean Ministerial Conference on Women, held in Port of Spain from 5 to 7 October 1999.

I should be grateful to have the text of the Port of Spain Consensus circulated as a document of the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".

(Signed) George W. **McKenzie**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 24 March 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Port of Spain Consensus (adopted at the Third Caribbean Ministerial Conference on Women)

We, the Ministers with responsibility for women's affairs of the Caribbean and government representatives participating in the third Caribbean Ministerial Conference on Women in Port-of-Spain, reaffirm our commitment to the Regional Platform for Action, the Beijing Platform for Action and the subsequent regional plans, including the Regional Plan of Action of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which have emerged as part of the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women,

Recalling the decision of the General Assembly, in resolution 52/231 of 4 June 1998, to convene, from 5 to 9 June 2000, a special session to appraise and review the progress achieved in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the Beijing Platform for Action and to consider further actions and initiatives,

Recalling also that General Assembly resolution 52/231 encourages regional preparatory activities for the special session by Governments, in cooperation with the regional commissions, and recommends submission of the information on the implementation of the Platform for Action as an input to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fourth session, in the year 2000,

Recognizing the importance of the regional and subregional monitoring of the global and regional platforms for action, such as will occur at the eighth Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean,

Reaffirming the Georgetown Consensus of the second Ministerial Conference on Women, which recognized the need for accelerating the pace of implementation, while affirming the spirit of collaboration with non-governmental organizations and cooperation among intergovernmental agencies, and made recommendations to advance the process towards the attainment of gender equality, social justice and development,

Agree to adopt and elaborate the following recommendations aimed at strengthening the process towards the attainment of gender equality, social justice and development in the region:

1. Accelerate action in promoting an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres through the implementation of:

(a) Gender analysis and planning;

(b) Gender management systems;

(c) Gender impact assessments;

2. Implement those areas in the Platform for Action that address macroeconomic policies aimed at economic development by, *inter alia*:

(a) Engaging in gender impact assessment of macroeconomic and budgetary policies;

(b) Evaluating the adequacy of macroeconomic variables used to define poverty in the prevailing economic situation in each country, recognizing that emphasis on economic indicators may distort the measurement and understanding of poverty levels;

(c) Applying data on female-headed households as part of macroeconomic policy formulation;

(d) Engaging in economic literacy programmes for women;

(e) Ensuring actions that target social and economic development of women (such as micro-enterprise training, agri-processing training and skills training), be complemented by adequate levels of support through the extension of credit facilities, technical assistance and marketing initiatives;

(f) Ensuring the provision of adequate resources for effective programmes for the alleviation of poverty among women;

(g) Influencing employment creation strategies to ensure gender sensitivity;

3. Emphasize the need for a coherent, coordinated and participatory approach among all partners in development in the implementation of national poverty eradication plans and programmes, which fully take into account the gender perspective;

4. Consider and take account of negative economic effects created by globalization, loss of preferential access to markets and trade embargoes in policy formulation and national agreements, since these contribute to increasing levels of poverty and unemployment and to cultures of violence;

5. Consider the design of a pilot programme using a thematic entry to test the gender planning process. A suggested theme is "poverty eradication", as it requires a multisectoral approach for solution and is thus relevant to the multisectoral nature of gender equity. It would also enhance the measurement of success of gender planning;

6. Call upon regional and international organizations to provide financial and technical resources to conduct research and undertake other initiatives focused on women and poverty in the Caribbean subregion, paying attention, *inter alia*, to women's unwaged and low waged work;

7. Develop national implementation strategies or plans of action to address the implementation of the Platform for Action, bearing in mind that shifts in resource allocation at the national level may be necessary and that governmental access to financial and technical resources from international agencies may be determined by the existence of such plans;

8. Ensure collaboration among the national machineries for women and key sectoral ministries in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Copenhagen Declaration of the World Summit for Social Development;

9. Incorporate the gender perspective in environmental planning and ensure the inclusion of women in the decision-making process and in the assessment of the impact of natural disasters, consistent with women's contribution to sustainable

development through their participation in economic and social development processes and environmental protection;

10. Provide leadership management training and gender analysis for female parliamentarians and women in political parties, the public and private sectors, non-governmental organizations, local government and community groups;

11. Strengthen the national machineries for women through the following:

(a) Training in collaboration with training institutions, universities and international agencies to ensure a comprehensive understanding of gender mainstreaming as a critical element in the achievement of gender equality, equity and social justice;

(b) Provision of the necessary technical, material and financial resources to empower the national machineries for women to implement the various plans of action;

(c) Minimizing the dislocation of the women's/gender bureaux and utilizing the skills, experience and expertise of the technical officers with responsibility for women's/gender affairs;

(d) Adjusting the nomenclature of the government ministries with responsibility for women/gender affairs to fully reflect the inclusion or content of the portfolio;

12. Ensure that mechanisms are established to accelerate the achievement of gender equality in political participation and representation at all levels of the electoral process, in the composition of boards, commissions and other public appointments and in the granting of national honours and awards. In so doing, ensure that there is no regression of advancements already made;

13. Promote research on "women and governance" through various agencies, institutions, including universities, to identify, *inter alia*, measures that would counter the under-representation of women in the electoral process and other areas of decision-making;

14. Promote biographical research on the recipients of the triennial women's award of the Caribbean Community;

15. Monitor the outcomes of education and training and systems of mentoring to facilitate women's greater access to decision-making;

16. Undertake further research and analysis on gender socialization practices and its impact on education choices and career options;

17. Develop gender-sensitive teaching materials, classroom practices and curricula and regular gender training for teachers to eliminate gender stereotypes and to develop non-discriminatory education and training aimed at the physical and intellectual development of both girls and boys. Teacher training is an essential component in the transmittal of gender-sensitive programmes for eliminating the differential behavioural expectations of girls and boys that reinforce the division of labour by gender;

18. Research and disseminate findings on techniques for improving teachers' capabilities to deliver gender-sensitive instruction in order to support the development of multicultural, gender-sensitive curricula in all areas of instruction;

19. Support the establishment of a Caribbean education and research unit, which would be responsible for disseminating research findings within the region so that duplication and wastage would be avoided;

20. Research and address the root causes of violence against women, recognizing that gender-based violence is of major concern in the region. In this regard, the following should be considered:

(a) Policy and programmatic interventions should be based on an understanding of the nature and types of violence against women and of how this violence in all its manifestations is constructed, perpetuated and reproduced. Gender-specific research and data collection is necessary, therefore, for a better understanding of the nature of violence against women;

(b) Review policies concerning corporal punishment in schools and other institutions for children in light of the obligations of States under the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

(c) Examine and develop alternative and developmentally sound forms of discipline of children, recognizing that corporal punishment, as a dominant means of discipline in schools and at home, is often abusive and may be one of the roots of violence against women;

(d) Provide gender training to caregivers of children, and particularly to teachers, to enhance an appreciation of their role in the socialization of boys and girls, given that certain socialization practices contribute to the perpetuation of gender violence;

(e) Study and address the construction of undesirable forms of masculinity and the ways in which violence against men and boys in, for example, educational and penal institutions, contributes to such construction;

21. Take measures to prevent violence against women and children by promoting the adoption of protective legislation, where it does not already exist, and by emphasizing the prosecution of perpetrators of violence against women;

22. Encourage non-partisan mechanisms and advocacy strategies to facilitate the ongoing review, monitoring and implementation of legislation to counteract and eradicate violence against women;

23. Encourage the provision of counselling services for both victims and the perpetrators of violence against women;

24. Develop appropriate training, advocacy and awareness programmes for judicial, legal, medical, social sector, educational, media and police personnel to sensitize them to the nature of gender-based acts and threats of violence, with a view to ensuring the effectiveness of legislation and the fair treatment of female victims;

25. Encourage Governments to sign and/or ratify or accede to, as appropriate, all international human rights conventions and instruments relevant to the advancement and protection of women's rights and, thereafter, to implement the provisions of these human rights instruments;

26. Maintain and strengthen the process of review and reform of legislation and of administrative and bureaucratic practices to ensure full compliance with the

relevant international human rights conventions, most particularly, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

27. Ensure the effective implementation of enacted legislation at national level, which eliminates direct as well as indirect forms of gender discrimination;

28. Develop and strengthen programmes aimed at ensuring women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, in keeping with decisions taken at the International Conference on Population and Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women;

29. Investigate the utility of the retroviral agent in the treatment of pregnant women infected with the HIV virus and apply this treatment modality in the primary health care and safe motherhood practice, where appropriate;

30. Consider and address the issue of women's mental health in the context of, *inter alia*, domestic violence and sexual and reproductive health and rights;

31. Evaluate the impact of health sector reform and social policy reform on women's health and implement policy modifications as indicated by research findings;

32. Address the needs of older women through the development and maintenance of adequate pension schemes and create and develop relevant programmes aimed at ensuring the security and dignity of the older woman;

33. Encourage collaboration among regional and international agencies through periodic meetings of agencies to facilitate cooperation with regard to funding and the sharing of programme plans.